

# Kohl's lacks policy on shoppers using slurs

By Meliqueica Meadows  
Special to Sentinel-Voice

ST. LOUIS (NNPA) — Jacqueline Clay went to the Kohl's in suburban Bridgeton, Mo., recently looking for a deal and got more than she bargained for.

Clay said she was shopping with her two young children when a White child in the company of another customer called Clay by a racist name. When she brought this to the attention of the manager, an African-American man named Bart (Kohl's would not release his full name), she said he told her there was nothing he could do.

When she persisted with her complaint to regional management at Kohl's, she said she was told Kohl's had no policy for policing the use of racist language by shoppers at the store.

Two weeks ago, on a Sunday afternoon, around 2:00

p.m., the 38-year-old mother took her 3-year-old son, Jai'Len, and daughter Jaquala, age 6, into the Kohl's department store located at 12222 St. Charles Rock Rd. While browsing near the men's department, Clay said she stopped suddenly when she heard a racist slur from a young White girl.

"I heard a little White girl say, 'Look, a nigger lady.' I said, 'What did you say?' and she repeated herself," Clay said. "Her grandfather was standing there. I asked him if he was going to let his granddaughter speak that way. He said, 'Yep.' They were laughing and smiling about it."

Clay said she immediately located a store manager, Bart, an African-American male, handled Clay's complaint. She said he told her — in front of the girl and her grandfather — that there was

nothing he could do about the incident and that he could not put them out of the store.

"I said, 'So, it's okay that she said this, in front of my children?'" Clay said.

"I was gesturing in his direction, so the grandfather approached, with this smirky look. The manager said to the man that there had been a complaint, but he said right away, 'We can't put you out of the store.' I wondered, whose defense was he in?"

Clay said that by this time a crowd of about 10 onlookers had gathered, including the child's grandmother, who said that Clay had simply misheard her granddaughter.

"She said the girl was talking about a mannequin and had said 'naked,' not 'nigger,'" Clay said.

"I know the difference between those two words. There was no mannequin in the area. That little girl was pointing right at me and

laughing when she said it."

As she walked away from the scene, Clay received another surprise.

"A lady from the jewelry department came over and said, 'My manager said he wanted to give you something.' He gave me 25 percent off my purchases," Clay said.

She continued to shop and spent more than \$100 in the store that afternoon. Later, she called the store regarding discrepancies with her discount.

"The manager (Bart) went off on me, saying he gave me 25 percent off when he didn't have to give me nothing," Clay said.

Clay's next step was to inform the district manager, Rob Carballo.

"Rob Carballo said Kohl's has no policies (on the use of racist language by shoppers). He said, 'There is nothing I can do.' Why can't you enforce a policy on racial

slurs?" Clay said.

"If this happened with one of our people [a Black person], saying something to a White, you know police would have been on the scene immediately and somebody would have gone to jail."

Carballo did not return requests for comment. Kohl's representative Julie Lando provided a written statement. According to Lando, a customer could be asked to leave the premises of a Kohl's department store based on "behavior that threatens the safety or well-being of another customer or associate."

Apparently, Kohl's officials do not deem the use of a racist slur directed towards a customer as threatening to either their safety or well-being.

The statement also claimed, "Kohl's strongly believes in creating a shopping environment that is not discriminatory on any basis."

A request for clarification about specific actions the company took to resolve the situation was not granted. However, Kohl's did issue an additional written statement in which they simply said, "the other customer involved denied that the statement was ever made."

Clay said she would no longer shop at the retail chain and urged other African-Americans to refrain from doing so as well.

"I am very frustrated that my kids had to witness this. And there were people watching," Clay said.

"I'm sure I was the talk of the dinner table on Sunday night. They were saying, 'I was in Kohl's today, and a lady got called a nigger and nothing was done about it. You can go to Kohl's and call a nigger a nigger and nothing will be done about it.'"

Meliqueica Meadows writes for the St. Louis American.

## Steelers

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team's locker room - "This is the closest team we've ever had," Cowher said - and this team's future.

The core components are relatively young, which should make the Steelers contenders for years: the 23-year-old Roethlisberger, the youngest QB to win a Super Bowl; Willie Parker, the running back who starred for a Super Bowl champion after not starting in college; Super Bowl MVP receiver Hines Ward; All-Pro guard Alan Faneca; safety Troy Polamalu; nose tackle Casey Hampton; linebackers Joey Porter and James Farrior.

"This will make coach Cowher even hungrier," defensive end Aaron Smith said. "He will enjoy this, but come next season he'll be even hungrier to get back here."

There will be the inevitable changes created by free agency. Eleven players can become unrestricted free agents, including Antwaan Randle El, who threw the first Super Bowl touchdown pass by a wide receiver; defensive end Kimo von Oelhoffen, cornerback Deshaea Townsend, safety Chris Hope, backup quarterback Charlie Batch and running back Verron Haynes. Starting cornerback Ike Taylor is a restricted free agent.

And while Cowher cited Columbus to inspire his team, maybe he also should have quoted Robert Frost's poem "The Road Not Taken."

Frost wrote: "I took the road less traveled by, and that has made all the difference."

The Steelers took the road less traveled, too, and what a difference it made.

## Your Horoscope Says... Feb. 9-Feb. 15

### ARIES

Your social life gives big rewards during the week. However, give attention to e-mail contacts. Don't be afraid as your mental horizon expands into new areas. Your busy mind is focused on productivity and achievement. Both come easily to you, so take advantage and press forward.

Soul Affirmation: You are gifted with the ability to give.

Lucky Numbers: 9, 28, 39

### TAURUS

Your relationships can receive a big boost from a trip that beckons. Business is also highlighted. Your strong mental energy is sustained through the week. Work it out by talking it out.

Soul Affirmation: This week is the week the Lord has made. I rejoice in it.

Lucky Numbers: 31, 48, 52

### GEMINI

Your vibes are calling to you this week to think fondly of all the love you are now giving and have given. Love, itself, makes you a better you. So act the fool, and love with all your big sunny self. If things get stressful, repeat your magic word to yourself: LOVE!

Soul Affirmation: Freedom of mind is the greatest gift for me this week.

Lucky Numbers: 8, 15, 33

### CANCER

Romantic daydreams may distract you from work this week; try to stay focused, but also enjoy your mental trips to romantic sunnier spaces. These images will inspire you to take action regarding a trip or get-together with your honey.

Soul Affirmation: I let my dreams take over my mind to provide enjoy-

ment.

Lucky Numbers: 27, 32, 41

### LEO

Joy this week comes from love. You are especially attractive. Stage your week so that you spend time around people you want to attract. It is easy for you to bring harmony into your relationships. Your ability to communicate is greatly enhanced. Use it to your best advantage.

Soul Affirmation: The success of others is the investment I make in myself.

Lucky Numbers: 30, 45, 46

### VIRGO

Are you spending money with little or nothing to show for it? This is because you're looking for something that money can't buy. Now is a good time to spend some of your emotional currency, and don't be cheap. You'll create a situation in which people will work hard to please you.

Soul Affirmation: Friendships are shock absorbers on the bumpy roads of life.

Lucky Numbers: 16, 50, 52

### LIBRA

You may like to go to war, but avoid an argument with a friend; it will slow down all the wonderful progress you've been making. Your patience will be tested this week, stay on task. Focus! Focus!

Soul Affirmation: I smile and trust in the powers beyond myself.

Lucky Numbers: 2, 20, 23

### SCORPIO

Pay attention to the details in your big bright beautiful picture this week. You'll handle everything that comes up if you keep your focus sharp. A grand social event is in store for the week.

Soul Affirmation: I am willing to make changes in my life.

Lucky Numbers: 5, 17, 19

### SAGITTARIUS

Skip it! Don't sweat the small stuff; it'll only bring you down. Don't run around inside your own head this week. Focus your awareness outside on something beautiful. Compromise is a key idea this week.

Soul Affirmation: Jewelry reflects the beauty of my feelings about myself.

Lucky Numbers: 40, 43, 49

### CAPRICORN

Someone in the family is ready to give you something. Open yourself up to it. Home improvement — mental, physical and spiritual — is this week's best theme. Seek the simple pleasures from a neglected hobby this week.

Soul Affirmation: I love charming, positive head games.

Lucky Numbers: 18, 24, 36

### AQUARIUS

Entertainment and companionship are high on your list of things to enjoy this week. Use your mental gifts to speed carefully through your work so that you'll have more time for fun this week.

Soul Affirmation: This week, silence speaks loudest and truest.

Lucky Numbers: 5, 15, 31

### PISCES

Your only real caution this week is to watch your budget. Other than that, happiness remains the focus, as relationships heat happily up. Your family is very supportive and loving right now; let them meet your new admirer.

Soul Affirmation: I speak my mind knowing that truth is my best defense this week.

Lucky Numbers: 4, 14, 33

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